Costa: This Legislation   Will Provide Health Care Coverage For 11 Million   Children

WASHINGTON, D.C. –   Today,   Congressman Jim Costa (D-Fresno) supported HR 2, the State Children's Health   Insurance Program (SCHIP) Reauthorization bill which was passed by the House of   Representatives by a vote of 289 to 139. It now heads to the United States Senate for consideration. This bill renews and improves SCHIP, and is estimated   to provide health care coverage for 11 million children. In Fiscal Year 2007,   there were approximately 1,538,416 California children covered under   SCHIP.

"Our children are the   most vulnerable people in our nation, and passage of this bill is the first step   in ensuring they can receive proper health care," said Costa. "Valley hospitals   and clinics struggle to treat the uninsured and underinsured in their   communities, and passage of SCHIP will appropriately fund a program that has   helped to reduce the percentage of uninsured children in California from 21% to   14%."

The bill passed by the   House today renews and improves SCHIP, and reauthorizes it for four and a half   years – through Fiscal Year 2013. Once signed into law, it will ensure that the   7 million children who currently participate in SCHIP continue to receive   coverage, and extends coverage to 4 million more uninsured children, according   to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office. This legislation is fully paid   for with an increase in the tobacco tax and closes a loophole in Medicare that   allows physicians to profit from referring their patients to hospitals in which   they have an ownership interest.

"Taxpayers are already   paying for the health care of the uninsured in the most expensive way possible: through emergency room care. Every dollar spent on the SCHIP program helps to reduce the burden of uncompensated care born by our hospitals and health clinics   by allowing uninsured children to seek early care for an illness. This is a more   efficient expenditure of taxpayer dollars and a more effective way to provide   healthcare," concluded Costa.